

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-32 (Canceled).

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): A process for producing an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin, comprising
feeding an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin into an extruder,
keeping the temperature of the melting resin in the extruder at 70 to 170°C,
adjusting an amount of water by supplying or removing water in the extruder, and
discharging the copolymer resin having a water content right after being discharged of
5 to 40 weight %,

wherein washing water is supplied to the extruder for washing the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin, the resin is washed by the washing water, and then water is removed in a liquid state by using at least one selected from the group consisting of a dewatering slit and a dewatering hole from at least one place downstream from the washing water supply portion, and residue of saponification catalyst contained at the time of production of the resin is removed.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 33, wherein the residue of saponification catalyst contained in the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin fed into the extruder is an alkali metal ion and the content of the ion is 0.1 to 5 weight % based on metal.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 34, wherein the content of alkali metal ion contained in the washed ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin is 0.05 weight % or less based on metal.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 33, wherein the washing water is an aqueous solution of acid having a pKa of 3.5 or more at 25°C.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended): A process for producing an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin, comprising

- feeding an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin into an extruder,
- keeping the temperature of the melting resin in the extruder at 70 to 170°C,
- adjusting an amount of water by supplying or removing water in the extruder, and
- discharging the copolymer resin having a water content right after being discharged of 5 to 40 weight %,

wherein said removing water removes water in the form of liquid water ~~or vapor~~ ~~water~~ from a water-containing ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin, and the water is removed from at least one place of the extruder.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 37, wherein said removing water uses at least one selected from the group consisting of a dewatering slit and a dewatering hole.

Claims 39-43 (Canceled).

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): An ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet, produced by feeding an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin into an extruder, keeping the melting temperature of the resin in the extruder at 70 to 170°C, adjusting an amount of water by supplying or removing water in the extruder, discharging the copolymer having a water content right after being discharged is 5 to 40 weight %, and then cutting the discharged ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin after being discharged from the extruder and drying the cut product until the water content is 1 weight % or less, wherein no spherocrystals are observed in the center of the cross section of the resin pellet when the cross section is observed by the use of polarization microscope with a magnification of 600, wherein water is removed by using at least one selected from the group consisting of a dewatering slit and a dewatering hole.

Claim 45 (Currently Amended): An ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet, produced by feeding an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin into an extruder, keeping the melting temperature of the resin in the extruder at 70 to 170°C, adjusting an amount of water by supplying or removing water in the extruder, discharging the copolymer having a water content right after being discharged is 5 to 40 weight %, and then cutting the discharged ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin after being discharged from the extruder and drying the cut product until the water content is 1 weight % or less, wherein the angle of repose is 23°C or less when the resin pellets are piled, wherein water is removed by using at least one selected from the group consisting of a dewatering slit and a dewatering hole.

Claim 46 (Previously Presented): An ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet, exhibiting no spherocrystals in a center of a cross-section when observed by use of a polarization microscope with a magnification of 600.

Claim 47 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 46, wherein at least one additive selected from the group consisting of a carboxylic acid, a boron compound, a phosphoric acid compound, an alkali metal salt, and an alkali earth metal salt is added to the pellets.

Claim 48 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 47, wherein the carboxylic acid is present and is at least one selected from the group consisting of acetic acid and lactic acid.

Claim 49 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 47, wherein the content of alkali metal ion contained in the pellets is 0.05 weight % or less based on metal.

Claim 50 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 47, wherein an ethylene content in the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer is in the range of 3 to 70 mol%, and the saponification degree is in the range of 80 to 100 mol%.

Claim 51 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 47, wherein the water content of the pellets is 1 weight % or less.

Claim 52 (Previously Presented): An ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet, exhibiting an angle of repose of 23° or less when piled.

Claim 53 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 52, wherein at least one additive selected from the group consisting of a carboxylic acid, a boron compound, a phosphoric acid compound, an alkali metal salt, and an alkali earth metal salt is added to the pellets.

Claim 54 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 53, wherein the carboxylic acid is present and is at least one selected from the group consisting of acetic acid and lactic acid.

Claim 55 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 53, wherein the content of alkali metal ion contained in the pellets is 0.05 weight % or less based on metal.

Claim 56 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 53, wherein an ethylene content in the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer is in the range of 3 to 70 mol%, and the saponification degree is in the range of 80 to 100 mol%.

Claim 57 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 53, wherein the water content of the pellets is 1 weight % or less.

Claim 58 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 37, wherein the water is removed from at least one place of the extruder in the liquid state.

Claim 59 (Canceled).

Claim 60 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 44, wherein the amount of water is adjusted by removing water from the extruder.

Claim 61 (Previously Presented): The ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellet according to claim 45, wherein the amount of water is adjusted by removing water from the extruder.

DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENT

Claims 33, 44 and 45 have each been amended to insert that the removal of water in the extruder is --by using at least one selected from the group consisting of a dewatering slit and a dewatering hole-- as supported by, for example, Claim 38. Claim 37 has been amended by deleting the embodiment of removing water in the form of vapor water. Claims 39-43 and 59 have been canceled.

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. With entry thereof, Claims 33-38, 44-58 and 60-61 will be pending in the application.